

T E N N E S S E E   F O L K L O R E   S O C I E T Y

B U L L E T I N

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VOLUME IX

NUMBER 4

December, 1943

## Welsh Folksongs

Miss Wynn Jones, when she was a graduate student at the University of Tennessee, collected the following songs and rhymes, and I made a sound recording of her version of the songs. In her own words, she tells the history of this material and give its interesting background.

From the recording, Miss Dorothy Horne transcribed the melodies which accompany the texts. Miss Jones and I wish to thank Miss Horne for the transcriptions.

x x x x x

I collected these songs and rhymes in October, 1942. They are the folk sayings and songs of my mother's family. My mother is Mrs. A. J. Jones of Knoxville; she was Edith Wynn before her marriage. She was born in Mahoney City, Pennsylvania, in 1879, the third child in a family of twelve. Her parents were both Welsh. Her father, who was the parent from whom she learned most of her songs and sayings, came from Wales when he was sixteen years old, and settled in Mahoney City. In 1883 the Wynn family moved with several other Welsh families to Dowless, Kentucky, and established the mining settlement of East Tennessee. The Welsh culture was kept alive by Eisteddfodau, which were meetings held in a certain settlement to which other Welsh people from the surrounding territory came for the purpose of competitive singing. These festivals were held only on St. David's day, the first of March, and were accompanied with much merriment. It was in the mining camp, East Tennessee, that Edith Wynn learned the Welsh cultural heritage of folk-lore. The Welsh people with whom she associated there are no longer a group. They have moved to different parts of the country, and their Welsh songs have moved with them.

### I

This rhyme is a greeting with which Welsh folk greeted each other on Christmas morning. It was the custom to go from house to house early Christmas morning and recite this greeting. The family

in the house thus greeted asked those outside to come in and receive gifts. The custom of obtaining gifts in this manner was not followed when the collector was a child, but it was when her mother, Mrs. A. J. Jones, was young.

I wish you a merry Christmas and a happy New Year,  
A pocket full of money and a cellar full of beer,  
A big fat hog to last you the year.  
The roads are very muddy, and my shoes are very clean,  
I got a little pocket to put a penny in.

## II

This rhyme was not accompanied by any ritual, such as the gift receiving in I, but it was usually recited in Yuletide because of its first line.

Christmas comes but once a year.  
There's not much strength in table beer.  
What's far off cannot be near,  
Nor Irish is not Latin.  
A Hackney coach is not a truck,  
A billy goat is not a duck,  
A cockatoo is not a rook,  
Nor a boot-jack's not a barrel.  
These are honest truths I vow,  
Pay attention to me now,  
And in the end you will allow  
That this is truthful knowledge.

## III

This song is one with which Mr. Wynn, Edith Wynn's father, entertained the Welsh people at Eisteddfodau. He sang it while dressed in a high silk hat, and while twirling a cane, at which he was quite adept. The song was accompanied by dance steps, which carried the rhythm after the lines, "My name is Pat," and "Just look at that."



Oh, my name it is Mc Can, Mc Can, Mc Can. I'm a  
true-born I - rish man, oh man, oh man.  
I love the O'Con-ner, O' - Con-ner, O' - Con-ner; I  
do up-on my honor, hon- or, hon - or. For my  
name is Pat ---- Just think of that---- We'll  
dance all night 'til broad day - light and go  
home with the gils in the morn - ing.

Oh, my name it is McCan, McCan, McCan.  
I'm a true-born Irish man, oh man, oh man.  
I love the O'Conner, O'Conner, O'Conner;  
I do upon my honor, honor, honor.

For my name is Pat----  
Just think of that----  
We'll dance all night 'til broad daylight  
And go home with the gils (girls) in the morning.  
We'll dance all night 'til broad daylight  
And go home with the gils in the morning.

I took my Judy to a ball, a ball, a ball.  
 She couldn't dance a'tall, a'tall, a'tall.  
 So we got a drop of whisky, whisky, whisky.  
 And then we both got frisky, frisky, frisky.

(Repeat chorus)

My Judy I will marry, marry, marry;  
 We will no longer tarry, tarry, tarry.  
 But I'll go and buy a ring, a ring, a ring  
 And then we'll dance and sing, sing, sing.

(Repeat chorus)

#### IV

This song cannot be traced so easily to a certain source, but the song was learned by the collector's mother from a music teacher in Jellico, Tennessee. Nothing concerning the teacher could be remembered by her former pupil over a period of fifty-five years. Whether the words of the song originated from the Welsh language or some other language, or are pure nonsense, is unknown.

I wish I was on yon-der hill. There I'd set and  
 cry my fill Till ev - 'ry tear would turn a mill.  
 Dis cum bi-bo - lash-a boo sho reel.



## Chorus

5.

Shul, Shul, Shul li rule Shul li shack-a - rack - a

shul-a- bob-ba kuhl. First time I saw Sil - ly gal - ly eel.

Dis cum bi - bo - lash - a boo sho reel.

I wish I was on yonder hill.  
 There I'd sit and cry my fill  
 Till every tear would turn a mill.  
 Dis cum bibo-lasha boo sho reel.

Shul, Shul, Shul li rule  
 Shul li shackaracka shul-abobba kuhl.  
 First time I saw  
 Silly gally eel.  
 Dis cum bibo-lasha boo sho reel.

## V

This song is a Welsh ballad brought by the collector's grandfather from Wales. It was sung on no special occasion, but was the delight of the children of the family.

A shoul-der of mut - ton jumped out of France, Ma-

ri tal doo-dle me day, A shoulder of mut - ton jumped

out of France And caused all the peo - ple to be-



A shoulder of mutton jumped out of France,  
 Mari tal doodle me day,  
 A shoulder of mutton jumped out of France  
 And caused all the people to begin to dance.  
 Mari tal doodle me day.

It killed a man and he was dead,  
 Mari tal doodle me day,  
 It killed a man and he was dead;  
 They called for John Thomas to look in his head.  
 Mari tal doodle me day.

And in his head there was a spring,  
 Mari tal doodle me day,  
 And in his head there was a spring  
 With fifty-five salmon a-learning to swim.  
 Mari tal doodle me day.

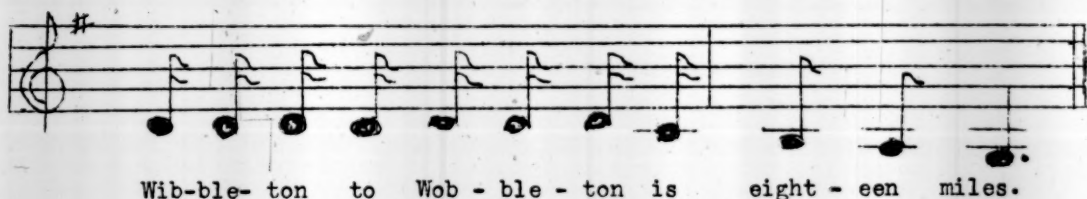
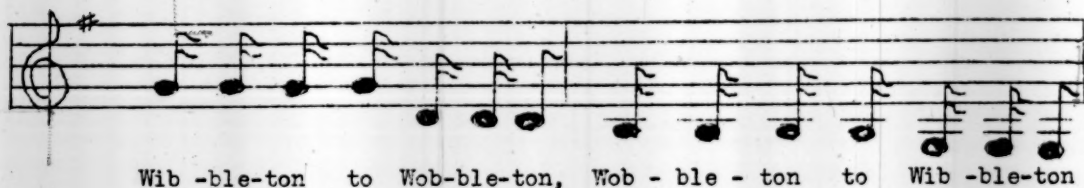
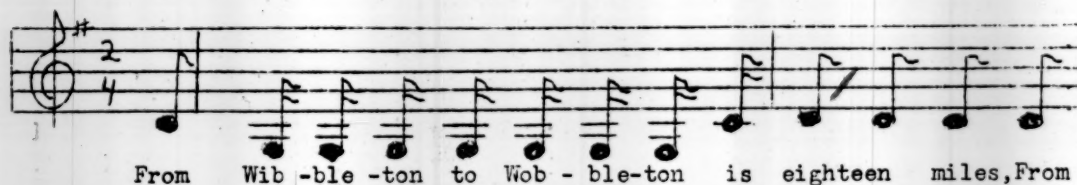
And one of the salmon as big as a cow,  
 Mari tal doodle me day,  
 And one of the salmon as big as a cow  
 With fifty-five salmon a-learning to plow.  
 Mari tal doodle me day.

And one of the salmon as big as a bull,  
 Mari tal doodle me day,  
 And one of the salmon as big as a bull  
 With fifty-five salmon a-learning to pull.  
 Mari tal doodle me day.

And one of the salmon as big as an elk,  
 Mari tal doodle me day,  
 And one of the salmon as big as an elk.  
 If you want any more, you can sing it yourself.  
 Mari tal doodle me day.

## VI

This song was sung by Cap'n Wynn at the Eisteddfodau. There was no other verse to the song, but this one verse was sung over and over, each time as if it were going to be a new verse. Perhaps it is a commentary on the Welsh sense of humor, but it is reported that the audience would laugh until they cried as he began each new verse.



From Wibbleton to Wobbleton is eighteen miles  
 From Wobbleton to Wibbleton is eighteen miles  
 From Wibbleton to Wobbleton, Wobbleton to Wibbleton  
 Wibbleton to Wobbleton is eighteen miles.



TENNESSEE FOLKLORE SOCIETY  
Treasurer's Report for 1943

Amount on hand November 21, 1942	\$ 16.95
Amount collected for 1943 membership dues and for sale of back files of Bulletin	<u>116.16</u>
Total Collected	\$ 133.11
 Total cost of issuing Bulletin for year 1943	 \$ 71.04
Postage for membership campaign and other official correspondence	4.50
Bank maintenance charge for account	<u>1.00</u>
Total Expenditure	\$ 76.54
 Amount on hand November 1, 1943	 \$ 56.57

Respectfully submitted,

*T. J. Farr*

T. J. Farr, Treasurer

## Notes and Comments

The exchange effected with the University of California brings us the last three volumes of their Anthropological Records. These are edited by A. L. Kroeber, R. L. Olson, R. H. Lowie and E. W. Gifford, and are published by the University of California Press.

The various numbers are as follows:

## Volume VI (1941-1942)

1. Culture Element Distributions: XV- Salt, Dogs, Tobacco, by A. L. Kroeber.
2. Culture Element Distributions: XVI- Girls' Puberty Rites in Western North America, by Harold E. Driver.
3. Culture Element Distributions: XVII- Yuman-Piman, by Philip Drucker.
4. Culture Element Distributions: XVIII- Ute- Southern, Palute, by Omer C. Stewart.

## Volume VII (1942)

1. Culture Element Distributions: XIX- Central California Coast, by John P. Harrington.
2. Culture Element Distributions: XX- Northeast California, by Erminie W. Voegelin.

## Volume VIII (1942-1943)

1. Culture Element Distributions: XXI- Round Valley, by Frank Essenc.
2. Culture Element Distributions: XXII- Plateau, by Verne F. Ray
3. Culture Element Distributions: XXIII- Northern and Gosiute Shoshoni, by Julian H. Steward.
4. Culture Element Distributions: XXIV- Central Sierra, by B. W. Aginsky.

T.F.S. members who wish to use these records may borrow any four numbers for a period of two months, paying transportation charges both ways.

## Picturesque Speech

Dr. E.R. Hunter gives us the following:

"After several days of overcast skies last February a friend said to me one morning, 'Well, I see Old Huldy is out again.' Old Huldy, it developed, is the sun. But my friend, nor any one else of whom I have inquired, knows anything about the meaning or currency of the term. He insists he had known it all his life.

"Another friend, called on for a forecast of the weather, said, 'It will rain like cows fighting before morning.' And it did."

The five a.m. bus was packed and jammed with defense workers. One would have sworn that it could not possibly hold another person; yet it stopped for a group of five. The driver admonished the passengers to step back, please, and let them on. The over-alled worker sighed as the new arrivals pushed past him.

"I'm drawn up now like my twelve-year-old boy's clothes," he said.

## Our Contributors

Dr. Edwin Kirkland, Associate Professor of English at the University of Tennessee, is well known to Southern folklorists. He is a past president of the Southern Folklore Society and has served as both vice-president and secretary-editor of the Tennessee Folklore Society. He has collected an admirable set of recordings of local songs and ballads, and he has written and spoken extensively on folk subjects.

Miss Nathalia Wright is the author of a volume of poems, The Inner Room, and a winner of the Albert Stanborough Cook Prize for Poetry. As a graduate student at Yale she helped Henry Seidel Canby in the preparation of his biography of Thoreau, and since that time she has written frequent articles on subjects connected with English or American literature. She is at present Assistant Librarian at Maryville College.

Backwoods to Border, ed. Mody C. Boatright and Donald Day.  
Texas Folk-Lore Society, Austin, and University Press, Dallas.  
1943. XV, 235 pp. (Texas Folk-Lore Society's Publications,  
no. xviii)

Twenty articles, a foreword, the proceedings of the Society, a list of the contributors and patrons, and an index comprise the eighteenth volume of the Texas Folk-Lore Society's publications. The annual miscellany is edited this year by Boatright and Day, the first since volume one in 1916, which was edited by Stith Thompson, not to be prepared by James Frank Dobie. Mr. Dobie, however, remains the general editor of the Society; during the current academic year he is a visiting lecturer in United States history at Emmanuel College, Cambridge.

The present volume is also a departure from the old routine of publication. It has been brought out by the Texas Folk-Lore Society together with the University Press of Southern Methodist University, a collaboration which is expected to facilitate its distribution. Mr. Day is associated with both the Society and the Press.

With one exception, the articles in the collection average nine pages each. Their topics are divided among buffalo-hunting songs, David Crockett's almanacs and legends about him, American tall tales or "whoppers," lives of Texas frontiersmen, branding procedures, square-dance calls, Indian legends, the decoration of graves, ghost stories, bumble-bee fighting, herb medicines, negro nicknames and fables, Mexican riddles and fables, rope-jumping rimes, the slang of pipe-liners, and anecdotes of the law.



The potpourri of the volume is further enriched by a reproduction of Cephas Washburn's painting, "The Arkansas Traveller," and of plates from Crockett's almanacs, an illustration of bee-fighting techniques, transcriptions of three buffalo-range tunes, and four facsimile pages from The Arkansas Traveller's Songster (1864).

The leading essay in the group, occupying fifty pages, is "The Arkansas Traveller," a condensation of her master's thesis by Catherine Marshall Vineyard. The article bears evidence of its academic origin, being the only item in the book shaped by a well-defined outline and substantiated by footnotes. Miss Vineyard has assiduously collated seven types, each with variations, of the famous dialogue between the traveller seeking a night's lodging and the impudent, fiddling Arkansan, and from them she has created a composite containing most of the variants. She has compared similar contemporary dialogues, summarized three theories of the tale's origin, sketched the history of its performance as an act, and noted its pictorial versions. Her study is both thorough and concise, and related with occasional gusto. The painting of the Traveller and the transcription of the tune, which accompany the text, increase its value.

More memorable, if more vulgar, than the Arkansas Traveller are Davy Crockett's "Backwood Belles," as Mr. Boatright, in his article of that title, dubs the female characters in Crockett's almanacs. Lottie Ritchers, who "carried twenty eyes in her work bag that she had picked out of the heads of certain gals of her acquaintance"; one-eyed Jerusha Stubbs, who had a short leg, few teeth, a harelip, a long nose, and a wen on her neck; Judy Coon, who "wore a bear skin petticoat, an alligator's hide for an overcoat, an eagle's nest for a hat, with a wildcat's tail for a

feather"; Crockett's aunt, who had been raised on rattlesnake brains and maple sap; and Mrs. Crockett, who when a bear attacked her on the way to meeting "caught the scruff of his neck in her teeth, and the bear shot ahead. . . and it stripped the skin clear off of him," are representative of the group.

The comparison suggested between these frontierswomen and the pale heroines of James Fenimore Cooper's forests should delight the most casual reader. The more serious folk-lorist will again applaud in this volume the variety and authority of the Texas Folk-Lore Society's publications.

Nathalia Wright